

## **General Information for Providers Regarding the End of the Public Health Emergency (PHE)**

April 25, 2023

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal DHHS declared a PHE and relaxed certain requirements to ensure Medicaid members could continue to access healthcare services. The federal DHHS has declared that the PHE will end on May 11, 2023.

Starting May 12, 2023, some billing flexibilities and how MaineCare members access health care services will revert to how they were administered prior to the declaration of the PHE.

In addition to the below guidance for providers, we are in the process of sending a letter notifying MaineCare members of changes related to the end of the PHE. See the [member letter](#) for the full details about changes that impact MaineCare members.

### **MaineCare Flexibilities and the End of the PHE**

Unless otherwise stated, flexibilities approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) under a Disaster State Plan Amendment or Section 1135 Waiver will end May 11, 2023; relevant policies will revert to current rule as written in the MaineCare Benefits Manual (MBM). The Department intends to permanently extend a few select flexibilities, and we will send additional information and related guidance pertaining to these limited flexibilities in the near future.

Unless otherwise stated, Section 1915(c): Appendix K Waiver Amendment flexibilities approved by CMS will end November 11, 2023. Please see our recent [message](#) about these flexibilities. We will release additional guidance in the coming months.

As some sections of the MBM have changed over the course of the PHE, OMS encourages providers to re-familiarize themselves with relevant sections. Some PHE-related flexibilities have already been incorporated into permanent rule, and the Department intends to engage in additional rulemaking in the near future.

### **COVID-19 Testing, Treatment, Vaccines, and Vaccinations**

In accordance with provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act, MaineCare will continue to cover COVID-19 testing, treatment, vaccine, and vaccine administration without cost sharing for MaineCare members through at least September 30, 2024.

The temporary testing, treatment, and vaccination coverage for uninsured individuals is ending on May 11, 2023. All impacted members will receive a letter, email, or text from the Office for Family Independence notifying them of the end of this coverage. We plan to issue further guidance for providers and members about the end of this coverage.

MaineCare covers COVID-19 at-home tests and home collection kits at no cost, but we will no longer cover mail-order COVID-19 tests.

## **Copays, Premiums, and Prescriptions**

Starting May 12, 2023, members may again have a copay for some services and a premium for certain types of coverage. We plan to issue further guidance for providers about changes to specific copays.

Starting May 12, 2023, members will not be able to request early refills or 90-day prescription supplies for some medications.

## **Payment Supports (“Outbreak Rates”) for Residential Facilities**

Payment supports, or “outbreak rates,” will end effective May 11, 2023 for Nursing Facilities (NFs), Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF-IDDs), and Appendices B, C, D, E, and F Private Non-Medical Institutions (PNMIs) that incur or have incurred additional expenses due to a COVID-19 outbreak within their facility. We plan to issue further guidance for providers about billing, including for outbreaks that are still occurring after May 11, 2023.

## **Changes to Eligibility for MaineCare Members**

At the beginning of the PHE, the federal DHHS implemented a continuous coverage requirement that required most Medicaid members to remain enrolled as part of enhanced federal funding to states. The continuous coverage requirement ended March 31, 2023, and Medicaid programs are now “unwinding” the requirement. This means Maine must review the MaineCare eligibility of all members between April 2023 and May 2024. For details about Maine’s plan, see [www.maine.gov/unwinding](http://www.maine.gov/unwinding). The Department has also put together a [communications toolkit](#), also available on the website, translated into several languages, to help community partners and others educate MaineCare members about this process. The toolkit includes posters, small cards, and other printable materials.

**We strongly suggest you check the Health PAS Online Portal to verify patients’ MaineCare eligibility** before you provide care and bill for services. See the [Health PAS Eligibility Verification Guide](#) for instructions on how to check member eligibility.

## **Questions?**

To support the MaineCare providers through this transitional period, MaineCare developed a provider-only [e-mail box](#) to submit questions related to the end of the PHE.